



Richmond VAMC

Veteran's Healthy Living Newsletter



**VA
HEALTH
CARE**

Defining
EXCELLENCE
in the 21st Century

Manage Stress

If you are having difficulty coping with life's demands, we call this 'stress'. A life without some stress would be boring. Most of us like some challenges, but too much stress creates problems.

People who are overly stressed report difficulty concentrating, feelings of worry and fear, a sense that the body is wound up (for example: tense muscles, sweaty palms, and a pounding heart), irritability with others and/or exhaustion. Too much stress over a long period of time can put your health at risk.

If you or someone you know is in an emotional crisis, call the Veterans' Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK and press 1 for Veterans.

STRESS, DEPRESSION AND THE HOLIDAYS: 12 TIPS FOR COPING

Acknowledge your feelings. If a loved one has recently died or you aren't able to be with your loved ones, realize that it is normal to feel sadness or grief. It's OK now and then to take time just to cry or express your feelings. You can't force yourself to be happy just because it's the holiday season.

Seek support. If you feel isolated or down, seek out family members and friends, or community, religious or social services. They offer support and companionship. Getting involved and helping others can lift your spirits and broaden your friendships. Consider volunteering at a community or religious function. You do not have to do it alone!

Be realistic. As families change and grow, traditions and rituals often change. Hold on to those you can and want to. Accept that you may have to let go of others. Example: if your adult children and grandchildren can't all gather at your house as usual, find new ways to celebrate together from afar such as sharing pictures, e-mails, skyping or videotapes.

Set differences aside. Try to accept family members and friends as they are, even if they do not live up to all your expectations. Practice forgiveness. Set aside grievances until a more appropriate time for discussion. Be understanding if others get upset or distressed when something goes awry. Changes are they're feeling the effects of holiday stress and depression too.

Exercise your Will Power to Develop Stamina for Big Challenges like Quitting Smoking or Sticking to a Budget....

1. Try using your non-dominant hand for half of the day **or**
2. Try not cursing for 24 hours **or**
3. Try saying 'yes' and 'no' instead of 'yup' or 'nope'.

-Baumeister & Tierney

Stick to a budget. Before you go shopping, decide how much money you can afford to spend on gifts and other items. Then be sure to stick to your budget. If you don't, you could feel anxious and tense for months afterward as you struggle to pay bills. Don't try to buy happiness with an avalanche of gifts. Consider donating to a charity in someone's name, give homemade gifts or start a family exchange.

Plan ahead. Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, visiting friends and other activities. Plan your menus and then make one big food-shopping trip. That will prevent a last-minute scramble to buy forgotten ingredients. Expect travel delays, especially if you are flying.

Learn to say no. Believe it or not, people will understand if you can't do certain projects or activities. If you say yes to only what you really want to do, you'll avoid feeling resentful, bitter and overwhelmed.

Don't abandon healthy habits. Don't let the holidays become a dietary free-for-all. Some indulgence is OK, but overindulgence only adds to your stress and guilt. Have a healthy snack before holiday parties so that you don't go overboard on sweets, cheese or drinks. Continue to get plenty of sleep and schedule time for physical activity.

Take a breather. Take time for yourself. Spending just 15 minutes alone can refresh you. Take a walk at night to stargaze. Listen to soothing music. Try reducing stress by clearing your mind, slowing your breathing and restoring inner calm.

Rethink resolutions. Resolutions can set you up for failure if they're unrealistic. Instead, try to return to basic, healthy lifestyle routines. Choose one resolution that helps you feel valuable and provides more than only fleeting moments of happiness.

Forget about perfection. Holiday TV specials are filled with happy endings. But, in real life, people don't always resolve problems within an hour or two. You may get stuck late at work and miss your daughter's school play, your sister may dredge up an old argument, your partner may burn the cookies and your mother may criticize how you are raising the kids. Accept imperfections in yourself and in others.

Seek professional help if you need it. Despite your best efforts, you may find yourself persistently sad or anxious, plagued by physical complaints, unable to sleep, irritable and hopeless, and unable to face routine chores. If these feelings last for several weeks, talk with your doctor or mental health professional.

TAKE BACK CONTROL OF HOLIDAY STRESS & DEPRESSION

-Mayo Clinic



how to **NOT** sabotage your health this holiday



EAT WISELY!

Fire and Spice Ham

18 3-ounce servings

5 1/2- to 6-pound) 33%-less-sodium smoked, fully cooked ham half

Cooking spray

1/2 cup red pepper jelly

1/2 cup pineapple preserves

1/4 cup packed brown sugar

1/4 teaspoon ground cloves

Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 425°.
2. Trim fat and rind from ham half. Score outside of ham in a diamond pattern. Place ham on a broiler pan coated with cooking spray. Combine jelly and remaining ingredients, stirring with a whisk until well blended. Brush about one-third of jelly mixture over ham.
3. Bake at 425° for 5 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 325° (do not remove ham from oven); bake an additional 45 minutes, basting ham with jelly mixture every 15 minutes. Transfer ham to a serving platter; let stand 15 minutes before slicing.

Nutritional Information

Amount per serving

Calories: 188

Calories from fat: 23%

Fat: 4.9g

Saturated fat: 1.6g

Monounsaturated fat: 2.3g

Polyunsaturated fat: 0.5g

Protein: 18.4g

Carbohydrate: 16.8g

Fiber: 0.0g

Cholesterol: 47mg

Iron: 1.4mg

Sodium: 865mg

